

Rolapp Mine, Tramway
Mouth of Bear Canyon
Price Canyon
Helper vicinity
Carbon County
Utah

HAER No. UT-53-B

HAER
UTAH,
4-HELP.V,
2-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Rolapp Mine, Tramway

HAER No. UT-53

Location: In Price Canyon, at the mouth of Bear Canyon, 4 miles northwest of Helper, Carbon County, Utah (SW/NE/NE/NW Section 35, T12S-R9E)

UTM: 12.510060E.4399270N
Quad: Standardville, Utah, 7.5'

Date of Construction: ca. 1913

Present Owner: Blackhawk Coal Company
P. O. Box 629
Helper, Utah 84526

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The tramway is associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history, i.e., early 20th century coal mining in Utah and the western United States. It was an integral part of the overall Rolapp mining operation in Bear Canyon, an economically successful operation that lasted for over 50 years. The tramway retains sufficient integrity of setting and physical integrity to convey feeling and association with their period of historical significance.

Historians: Robert G. Rosenberg, Historical Consultant
A. Dudley Gardner, Principal Investigator
Western Wyoming College

August 1988

The Rolapp tramway (Site 42Cb515, Structure S9, Feature 16) is located southwest of U. S. Route 6 near the mouth of Bear Canyon. It is situated on the west side of a gravel access road in Bear Canyon and is directly behind or west of the Rolapp lamphouse. It is surrounded by a growth of boxelder trees. The Rolapp tramway embodies a distinctive method of construction used in the coal industry.

The tramway runs on a nearly north-south orientation. On its southern end, it consists of an inclined earthen ramp that begins south of the lamphouse. It once started at the mine portal, which is now difficult to define, due to collapse and ground disturbing activity. Many wooden crossties are still in place from the track and define the pattern and location of the trackage. The track continues in a straight line from the mine portal toward the wooden trestle and hoisting house until it reaches a wye. The wye is curved and runs to a concrete slab to the west of the tram. This wye may have been used as a turnaround or siding for storing cars. The function of the concrete slab is unknown. The main track continues on the incline across a heavily-reinforced wooden timber bridge, with concrete abutments located directly behind or west of the lamphouse. The incline continues to a point where the dump material ends and drops off steeply to the natural topography or ground level. The wooden trestle and catwalk begin at this point. The earthen portion of the tramway incline is also flanked on the west by evenly-spaced, massive wedge-shaped poured concrete piers, that apparently supported the steel cables used in hoisting the cars. The catwalk is approximately 100 feet in length, 8.4 feet in width, and 12 to 14 feet above ground level. The deck of the trestle accommodates both a single track and a catwalk, paralleling the track to the east. The deck is supported by 2x8-inch timber piers or towers. Each tower consists of twin vertical timbers, braced with cross horizontal and diagonal cross members, secured with metal bolts. The bases of the trestles are anchored in poured concrete piers. The catwalk consists of spaced planks nailed to the deck, with a wood railing on the outside or east side of the trestle. The wooden trestle continues to incline on the same plane as the earthen approach, until it reaches the first trestle support pier. The tramway then slants downward to the hoisting house at its northern end. The north end of the wooden trestle portion of the tramway has partially collapsed. The tramway had only a single track, indicating that empty cars were not pulled back into the mine by the weight of the loaded cars.¹

The north end of the tramway apparatus consists of the remnants of the hoisting house. This structure is roofless and consists of locally-quarried cut sandstone walls laid with mortar. The stone was cut and laid by Italian stonemasons. This stonework is a chief architectural characteristic of mining-related structures in Carbon County. The hoisting house was built into

¹ Frank Pugliesi, personal communication, Mutual Mine, Utah, August 22, 1987.
Robert Wilson

a hillside on its west elevation. It is nearly square, measuring approximately 34 feet 3 inches on a side. It has a poured concrete floor, 18-inch-thick coursed sandstone walls and footer, and all door and window openings have either cement or wood timber lintels. All window glass, muntins, and frames are gone, as are all doors. The front elevation was on the east and had a large rectangular entrance flanked by two rectangular window bays. The north elevation has four evenly-spaced rectangular window openings. The south elevation retains a stone footer, extending about one foot above the concrete floor, the length of the wall. It appears that this elevation had a wood frame wall. The west elevation was built into the hillside, and it is no longer possible to determine whether it once had a wood frame or stone wall. The building line can only be inferred. The interior of the structure is empty, except for a large poured-concrete base for mounting the hoisting apparatus. This pad is located in the southwest portion of the building. There are two steel coal cars on their sides outside the southwest corner of the building. The following trademark can still be discerned on one of the cars:

MADE BY
PROUD FDRY. 7 MACH. CO.
PROVO - UTAH
SERIAL NO. 2127

The Rolapp tramway is in fair to poor condition. The earthen tramway has been damaged by bulldozing on its south end. The wooden trestle has partially collapsed on the north end, and the hoisting house is roofless and gutted. Nevertheless, the overall configuration of the tramway is intact, and sufficient physical remnants allow interpretation of its function.

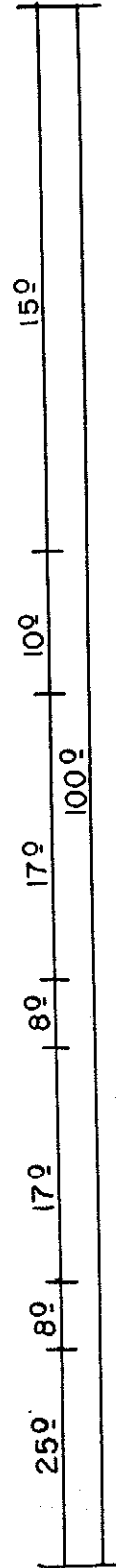
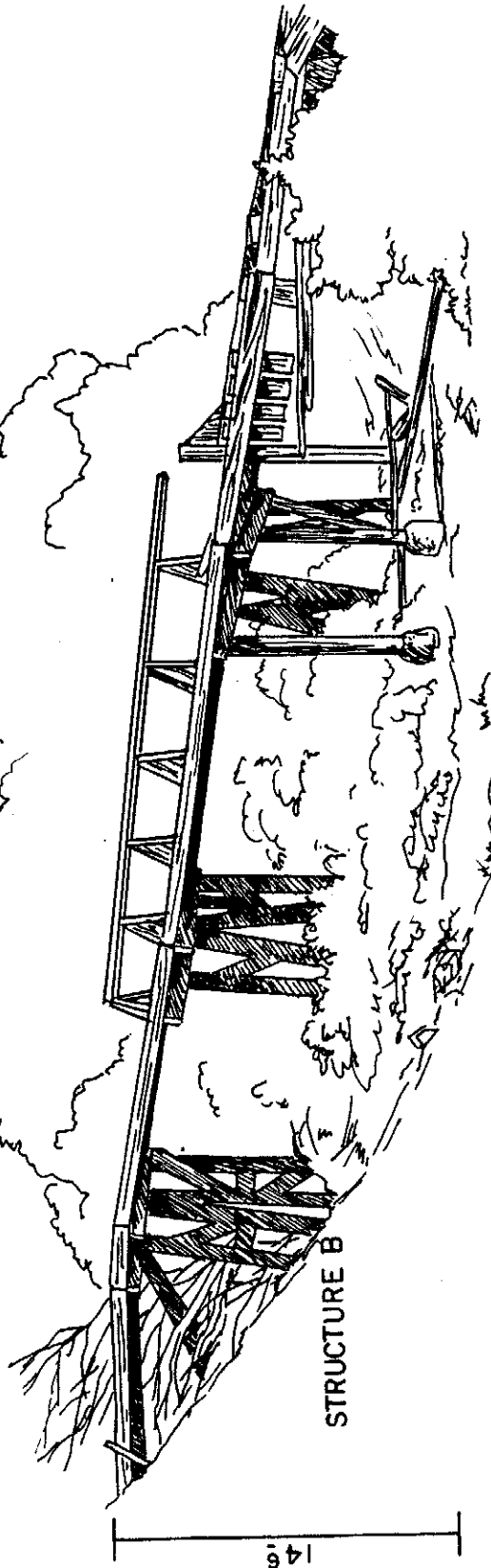
However, the tramway retains fair physical integrity, considering its age and susceptibility to vandalism, due to its accessible location. The integrity of setting is good, considering that most of the surrounding facilities have been torn down or removed. Some bulldozer work has occurred on the southern end of the feature. There have been no modern intrusions, except for an electrical substation that is somewhat screened by vegetation. Therefore, the Rolapp tramway still conveys feeling and association with its period of historical significance, i.e., early 20th century coal mining in Utah.

ROLAPP TRAMWAY

CARON COUNTY, UTAH

HAER No. UT-53-B

Drawn by Sharon Dolan 10/87



0 10 FT.



1 inch = 12.12 feet